

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2419, FOOD, CONSERVATION, AND EN- ERGY ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I reluctantly rise in opposition to H.R. 2419, the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008. This version of the Farm Bill bears significant improvements over its predecessors. I fully support the inclusion of an unprecedented 10.4 billion dollars over 10 years for the Nutrition Title that has been included in the Conference Report.

Funding for the Nutrition Title will have a strong impact on efforts to prevent domestic hunger by increasing the Food Stamp Program's minimum monthly benefit and the Emergency Food Assistance Program's mandatory funding level. Participation in the Food Stamp Program has increased over the last several years, with an additional 1.3 million people participating in the program in the last year alone. Portions of my district, including Lakewood, Fairview Park and Parma, have experienced a 74 percent increase in participation in the Food Stamp Program between 2002 and 2007. The bill also provides assistance to food banks by \$1.25 billion. I have been a consistent supporter of efforts in the House of Representatives to strengthen Food Stamp Programs, nutritional assistance programs, and other programs to increase the quantity and quality of food available to those most in need. I will continue to do so.

These programs help to address a severe short term problem. The purpose of the Farm Bill is to set long term priorities. However, this bill maintains the very policies that are driving several underlying problems.

For example, the single biggest share of subsidies under this bill goes to corn. Yet this bill continues massive subsidies for ethanol production from corn at only a slightly lower level than was previously the case. Corn-based ethanol is a well-known driver of recent increases in food costs. Some are predicting that 25 percent of the corn crop in the U.S. will go toward ethanol by the end of the 2008 crop year. That is great news for corporate agribusiness that produces most of the corn in the U.S. But it's bad news for food prices and those families for whom food costs are a large portion of their budget.

The vast majority of corn goes to cattle feed, which has health implications. It increases stomach acidity in the cattle, which makes them more susceptible to infection by E. Coli H:0157, the source of many food recalls. A corn-based diet also increases the level of saturated fat in the meat.

The ubiquity of corn in our diet is further implicated in various health problems like the obesity epidemic and diabetes. Abundant corn means that high fructose corn syrup, HFCS, a

food sweetener, is cheap and abundant. Most Americans would be hard-pressed to get through a meal without consuming it. It is high in calories, with little to no nutritional value. Between 1970 and 1990, HFCS consumption increased by 1000 percent, which is roughly the same period in which the obesity epidemic accelerated. This bill continues to subsidize HFCS, while taking only baby steps toward promoting healthy, locally grown fruits, vegetables and meats. According to writer Michael Pollan, "the real price of fruits and vegetables between 1985 and 2000 increased by nearly 40 percent while the real price of soft drinks (aka liquid corn) declined by 23 percent." Unhealthy food is cheap. Healthy food is expensive. The obesity and diabetes epidemics affect low-income Americans more often and with more severity.

The bill contributes to a host of environmental problems. It shortchanges conservation programs that can reduce global warming pollution. It removes the sod saver program which would have discouraged the alteration of valuable native grasslands and rangeland into crop production. It includes cuts to the Conservation Reserve Program and Wetland Reserve Program, which respectively substitute crops for resource conserving plantings on highly erodible and environmentally sensitive land and encourage restoration of lands to their original natural conditions.

It continues to encourage factory farms where our antibiotics are rendered weak or useless because of overuse on cattle, where cattle are treated inhumanely, where toxic runoff contributes to contaminated drinking water, and where employees suffer the highest rates of workplace injuries of almost any other industry.

Finally, this Farm Bill maintains massive giveaways to corporate agribusiness and rich families instead of helping the vanishing family farmer. Though the thresholds have been lowered compared to the past, this bill allows families with up to \$2.5 million in income to get subsidies. The result is that the top 10 percent of all the benefactors will get about two-thirds of the payments. This bill continues the failed policies that allow the profits of agribusiness to skyrocket while pushing family farmers off their farms, forcing them to sell their farms to survive.

Increasing funding to buy more nutritional foods is a good idea in the short term. But we need to stop perpetuating the very policies that cause food prices to increase and cause unhealthy food to be cheap. We need to move away from corn-based ethanol. We must shift subsidies toward healthier foods, like locally and regionally grown fruits, vegetables, grains and meats if we ever hope to address nutritional deficiencies. And we need to come to the aid of the family farmer. The Farm Bill does little to address these problems, and I could not vote for it.

HONORING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF ANALY HIGH SCHOOL, SEBASTOPOL, CALIFORNIA

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 16, 2008

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, today I rise with great pride to join in celebrating the 100th anniversary of Analy High School, located in Sebastopol, CA, and one of the most successful schools in my district.

Prior to the founding of Analy High School, students from West Sonoma County commuted to Santa Rosa High School, travelling by train or wagon, or even boarding during the week in Santa Rosa. When the people of the Sebastopol area decided the student population was large enough to support its own school, the Analy Union High School District (now the West Sonoma County Union School District) was started. From its origins in 1908 with a student body of 37, Analy has grown to support more than 1,200 students this year.

In 1910, five students received diplomas—the first graduating class of Analy High School. Since then, Analy High School has been named a California Distinguished School, and has graduated more than 30,000 students, including Dr. Willard F. Libby, the 1960 Nobel Prize winner in chemistry for his work in developing the process of carbon dating; actress Karen Valentine; Chicago Bears star tight end Jim Thornton; and numerous students who went on to become teachers, police officers, firefighters, business leaders, housewives, parents and grandparents of Analy graduates.

Madam Speaker, Analy High has come a long way from the days when students rode to class on horseback. It has contributed an educated populace to Sebastopol, to Sonoma County and beyond. I am proud to have such citizens in my district, and I ask you to join me in congratulating Analy High School on the past 100 years and wishing them the best of luck and continued success for the next 100 years.

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2008

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, today Congress will once again fund President Bush's Iraq War. With this \$162 billion in funding for the Pentagon there will have been more than \$750 billion committed to fight wars in Iraq and Afghanistan—all of it paid for with debt. In Iraq, the American people have witnessed tremendous valor from our armed forces, including the sacrifice of more than

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

4,000 Americans who have lost their lives and another 15,000 who were seriously wounded. Unfortunately, presidential leadership has not risen to this same high level of commitment for our soldiers. The Bush administration and their supporters in Congress are responsible for the greatest foreign policy disaster in American history and today their failed policies will be financed with debt for another year.

Today, I will oppose continuing to fund the Iraq War as I have in the past. This war is not making America safer, but it is weakening our military capacity, exhausting our troops and undermining our Nation's economic security. It is time to invest in America and the needs of the American people. I am appalled by the stories about defense contractors engaging in war profiteering, corrupt Iraqi officials fueling the sectarian divide, and reconstruction projects financed by the American people left unfinished or unused because of poor planning.

Now in the sixth year of the Iraq War, America is seeing the conflict in Afghanistan, the heart of the war on terror, grow more intense as the Taliban resurges. My support for the on-going U.S. effort in Afghanistan remains strong. I was in Afghanistan and Pakistan in March and the threats posed by the Taliban and al-Qaeda in those countries are real. It is tragic that the Bush administration's deception and failed policy in Iraq has taken the focus off of al-Qaeda and the Taliban.

Mr. Speaker, despite the failings and costly mistakes made by the Bush administration, the Democratic leadership in Congress is giving this Nation hope that the Iraq War will come to an end and that Washington will once again invest in the needs of the American people. Yet, the Bush administration rejects any spending on domestic priorities that will benefit the American people.

Look around our country. Healthcare is in crisis. America's infrastructure is deteriorating and collapsing—as we've seen with the 1-35W bridge in Minneapolis. With oil prices reaching \$125 per barrel there is still no significant federal investment in a massive expansion of renewable energy research, development and implementation. The list is long and it is the result of absolute neglect to invest in America by the Bush Administration and a Republican Congress that together led this nation from 2001 through 2006.

Democrats have new priorities for America and some of those priorities are clearly reflected in H.R. 2642. This bill provides a significant investment in those men and women who have served our country and deserve our gratitude and our support. H.R. 2642 restores GI education benefits to the veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars to help ensure their future success and our economic recovery. The cost of providing four-year college scholarships for our veterans for an entire year is less than we spend in one day in Iraq, and helps to change our mission from squandering tax dollars in Iraq towards investing in America.

The Majority has also responded to the economic crisis facing too many families by including extended unemployment benefits for workers who have exhausted the 26 weeks of regular benefits. The U.S. economy has lost 260,000 jobs in the last four months, and 1.35 million workers have been unemployed longer than 26 weeks. This extension will provide relief for the over 4 million Americans, including

nearly 70,000 Minnesotans, who are struggling to find a job, and help to stimulate the economy in a cost-effective, fast-acting way. To ensure that states and hospitals can continue to provide health care services for our most vulnerable, this bill includes a rejection of the Bush Administration's proposed regulations to slash federal funding from Medicaid.

H.R. 2642 gives relief to a growing global crisis by providing \$1.6 billion in emergency international food aid. Food assistance is desperately needed by the millions of families facing hunger and starvation this year due to rising food prices, natural disasters, economic downturns, and conflict situations. This is a moral and humanitarian response to end suffering around the world and is also a positive step the United States can take to restore our reputation in the international community.

Democrats will also try once again to change the policy and mission in Iraq. An amendment I support will require redeployment out of Iraq by December 2009, require that Iraqis contribute to the cost of their reconstruction, require that our military does not pay more for fuel than the Iraqis, requires additional training and rest for our soldiers and would finally and explicitly prohibit torture. Unfortunately, the Administration continues to oppose these common-sense, responsible policies to keep our troops safe, reduce the burden on the American taxpayer, and repair our standing in the world.

America needs a new direction—in Iraq and at home. Democrats are fighting to end the war responsibly, to reduce the debt burden on our children and grandchildren, and to reinvest in our future.

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2008

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose this most recent war funding appropriation brought before the Congress. While I cannot in good conscience provide the President with any additional funds that would continue this disastrous war well into the next president's administration, I do support Amendment #2, which attaches conditions to the war funding and would hold the President accountable. I also support Amendment #3, which would honor our veterans and provide desperately needed humanitarian funds to people both here and abroad.

As I have said before, the American people sent a clear message to the Congress on November 7, 2006: We must end the war in Iraq. In the ensuing months, the calls for withdrawal have only increased. A recent ABC News/Washington Post poll shows that 57 percent of Americans believe that the United States should withdraw its military forces from Iraq to avoid further U.S. military casualties, even if it means that civil order is not restored there.

Unfortunately, we stand here today, no closer to responding to the demands of the American people. This development frustrates me to no end and I know it frustrates the American people. Yet, it also strengthens my resolve to press harder for the outcome this country needs.

The ultimate, unequivocal authority of the Congress is the power of the purse. We must use it. The only way to truly support our troops is take them out of harm's way. The American people understand that marching ahead blindly into oblivion is anything but supporting our troops.

The longer this war drags on, the more its effects are felt in our communities and homes. Last year, the citizens of Detroit spent \$231.3 million to fund the war in Iraq. With those same funds, the Congress could have provided healthcare for 172,984 children. Even when faced with historically high food prices, a crumbling infrastructure, and the subprime mortgage crisis, the Administration continues to demand that the American people continue to pour billions of their taxpayer dollars into an unwinnable war. The priorities of this Administration could not be any more misplaced.

Of course, appeals to reason fall on deaf ears with this President. In an interview this week, President Bush was asked about the worst that could happen if the U.S. were to pull out of Iraq next year. The President responded: "The doomsday scenario of course is that extremists throughout the Middle East would be emboldened, which would eventually lead to another attack on the United States."

The President's overreliance on the tired rhetoric of fear, unchanged after five years of bloody occupation, exemplifies how intellectually bankrupt the justifications for his war policies have become.

Mr. Speaker, this lame duck President cannot scare the Congress and the American people into continuing his war. We know that it is the presence of our troops on the street corners of Basra and Fallujah that lures extremists to Iraq. We know that it is the unintentional desecration of holy sites, like the Golden Dome of Samarra, that inspires outrage in the hearts of young men throughout the Middle East and makes America more susceptible to another terrorist attack.

There is only one sensible way forward in Iraq. If the Congress acts this day to cut off funding for the war or to impose a timetable for withdrawal, we can begin the immediate phased drawdown of American troops and conclude it within 18 months. Such redeployment does not constitute "cutting and running." Instead, it offers the only hope for a diplomatic solution to the civil war raging inside of Iraq. With 160,000 troops in Iraq, Washington lacks the leverage on its own to push the Maliki government to take meaningful steps to accommodate Sunni concerns and thereby empower Sunni moderates. Similarly, the U.S. presence in Iraq allows the rest of the world to avoid responsibility for stability in and around Iraq, even as everyone realizes the stakes involved. Only a plan to draw down U.S. forces, coupled with a robust diplomatic surge, will prompt Middle Eastern states, European governments, and the United Nations to be more constructive and proactive in working to salvage stability in the Persian Gulf.

I came to Washington 43 years ago on a platform of Jobs, Justice, and Peace. Because it is my firm belief that we will never achieve peace in Iraq as long as this war continues, I cannot support a supplemental funding bill that allows a politically unaccountable President to continue an unwinnable conflict. Enough is enough.

NATIONAL PEACE OFFICERS
MEMORIAL DAY

HON. ADAM H. PUTNAM

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 16, 2008

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, a society cannot function properly without a means to enforce its laws and protect itself. However, we know all too well that safety and security does not come without a price. National Peace Officers Memorial Day was established to honor the men and women who have paid that price and I rise today to pay tribute to the one hundred and eighty-one federal, state and local law enforcement officers who gave their lives in 2007.

Sadly, Florida lost sixteen officers last year, two of which were from central Florida. On April 13th, Lieutenant Delmar Teagan of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission died in an automobile accident in Polk County. Then, on August 15th, Hillsborough County Sheriff's Sergeant Ronald Harrison was killed by a gunman in Brandon, Florida.

These officers provided communities with safety and security and we are indebted to their service. Like so many of our nation's law enforcement officers willing to work in harm's way, Lieutenant Teagan and Sergeant Harrison are true heroes.

Since 1962, National Peace Officers Memorial Day has been observed on May 15th. This is a time when thousands of law enforcement officers descend upon our Nation's capital to remember and honor their fallen colleagues. Mr. Speaker, our thoughts and prayers are with these men and women as they gather to recognize the officers who died in the line of duty while serving the people of this great Nation.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2419,
FOOD, CONSERVATION, AND EN-
ERGY ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in reluctant opposition to H.R. 2419, the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008.

Although I support many of the provisions included in the legislation before us today, I continue to oppose elements of the commodity title, which fall short of adequate reform. I have long opposed policy inequities in farm law that have resulted in large subsidies going to a few, mostly larger entities, leaving many small and family farms behind, including those in the state of Delaware. Under this legislation, millionaires will still be able to collect subsidies, even with the implementation of a means test, and direct payments are only cut by a minimal amount at a time when farm income is expected to reach a record high. Instead, we should be working toward maintaining an adequate safety net for farmers when food prices drop.

Addressing this issue would bring down the cost of the overall legislation. Conferees working on H.R. 2419 have used last year's base-

line to score the bill, thereby avoiding pay-as-you-go-rules, in order to hide a \$2.9 billion increase in the deficit. It is clear to me that these issues need to be addressed before moving forward with this legislation.

With that said, I am pleased that H.R. 2419 would increase funding for many of Delaware's priorities, including an additional \$7.9 billion for conservation programs. Specifically, I support funding for the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program, which would be doubled above current levels to provide the necessary resources to prevent farmland from conversion into non-agricultural usage. Critical funding of \$400 million would also be provided to aid producers in reducing run-off, improve water quality, and restore the wildlife in the Chesapeake Bay, a project that I strongly support.

This farm bill would also make significant boosts to nutrition programs of \$10.4 billion over current levels, including school nutrition programs, and expands the number of families eligible for food stamp assistance. This legislation provides increased assistance to food banks at a time when many Americans are struggling to pay their monthly bills. Funds would also be authorized to provide relief to those facing hunger around the world.

Furthermore, investments in energy are also included in this conference agreement as the ethanol tax credit is reduced, and instead, the tax credit for cellulosic energy production is increased which may alleviate some of the pressure corn-based ethanol has placed on food prices. With initiatives like these, we are working toward real alternatives to fossil fuels and moving one step closer to decreasing our dependence on fossil fuels.

While I do support many of the provisions in H.R. 2419 and feel that conferees have made significant strides toward a compromise farm agreement, the commodity title has been left without substantial reform, resulting in costs to the American taxpayer. I look forward to working with my colleagues to address these issues.

STRATEGIC PETROLEUM RESERVE
FILL SUSPENSION AND CON-
SUMER PROTECTION ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 13, 2008

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve Fill Suspension and Consumer Protect Act of 2008.

With gas prices at record highs and fast-approaching \$4 per gallon, our constituents are suffering. There are many factors contributing to the rise in prices—ranging from increased global demand, to wild speculation in the futures market, to the weakening dollar. Unfortunately Congress does not have the power to control all these factors. We do, however, have a responsibility to take what steps we can to lessen the burden that the price of gas has on our constituents. That is why I support suspending shipments of oil to the SPR.

The SPR is almost entirely full, and certainly full enough to be used in an emergency. By stopping shipments of oil to the reserve, we can add 70,000 barrels of oil per day to the

global market. There is evidence to show that this could lower at-the-pump prices by about a quarter per gallon. This action is a much needed first step for American families, businesses and the economy.

The supply of oil is finite, and as countries like China and India industrialize, and incomes in such countries enable people to afford cars, the demand on this limited commodity will drive prices upward in the long run. If our economy is to make a full recovery, we must reduce our dependence on ever more expensive and environmentally detrimental fossil fuels. That is why the Democratic 110th Congress raised CAFE standards for the first time in a generation and the House has time and again voted to remove subsidies for oil companies making the highest corporate profits in history and reinvest the money in the energy sources of tomorrow. What America really needs is a wholesale shift in energy policy.

I would like to thank the House leadership for bringing this important legislation to the floor, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting it.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2419,
FOOD, CONSERVATION, AND EN-
ERGY ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. MICHELE BACHMANN

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

Mrs. BACHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise with great reluctance to oppose the bill before us, H.R. 2419. After more than a year of negotiations, this is heralded as the best compromise that this Congress could come to. But with commodity prices through the roof, this bill rejects the opportunity to make a difference and instead subsidizes millionaires making up to \$2.5 million. It makes only a cosmetic cut at best to direct payments at a time when some farmers are receiving record prices for their commodity crops.

Taxpayer dollars are not Monopoly money yet this \$300 billion bill treats them as such and at a time when middle-class families are feeling the pinch at the pump and the grocery store and the college admission office that is simply unconscionable.

Additionally, this bill creates a permanent disaster program that is costly, unnecessary, and bureaucratic. The federal government already pays for (1) crop insurance to assist farmers when a crop fails, (2) counter-cyclical payments when prices drop, (3) marketing loans to allow farmers to finance a crop and guarantee a price, and (4) Direct Payments for no particular reason. Adding a whole new program to these existing programs is simply wasteful.

Mr. Speaker, simply put: This is not a farm bill. This is not a bill that provides a safety net for community farmers that need our help. This is not a bill that addresses the skyrocketing costs of farm products that struggling families experience every day. This bill is business as usual Washington-style.

Our agricultural policies are in desperate need of commonsense improvements and this bill fails to deliver. We should reject this bill that does nothing to support family farmers and go back to the drawing board for real reform.

Farming is an important part of Minnesota's culture. A true love of the land and of nature's beauty is ingrained in our collective psyche and I have too much respect for those who live by the land to support this bill which does nothing to reform our farm programs but soaks the American taxpayers—both those who farm for a living and those who do not—with a deluge of unrelated pork and wasteful spending.

TRIBUTE TO EXERCISE TIGER FOUNDATION

HON. JIM SAXTON

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 16, 2008

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the Exercise Tiger Association, a National Commemorative Foundation. The Association bears the name of a little known World War II naval battle which claimed the lives of several hundred American servicemen.

"Exercise Tiger" was originally a practice operation, preparing for the upcoming D-Day invasion. On the morning of April 28th, 1944, German submarines stumbled upon the operation, proceeding to torpedo the mostly defenseless landing ships. Three of the landing ship tanks were sunk and 749 servicemen lost their lives.

The Exercise Tiger Association goes to great lengths to commemorate this engagement and honor the memory of the servicemen who lost their lives that day. The Association has a wreath tribute and ceremony each year. The annual ceremony recently became a national tribute, when wreaths were dropped simultaneously into both the Pacific and Atlantic Ocean, honoring veterans nationwide.

Under the leadership of Walter Domanski, the National Director, this organization has also awarded veterans, servicemen, and other noteworthy individuals with numerous accolades, honoring service and sacrifice to our country.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to Walter Domanski and the Exercise Tiger Association for honoring our Nation's brave men and women of the Armed Forces and for providing the opportunity to embrace the memory of the lives lost on that day in 1944.

HONORING OUR VETERANS BY EXPANDING THE GI BILL

HON. GABRIELLE GIFFORDS

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 16, 2008

Ms. GIFFORDS. Madam Speaker, I strongly support the passage of H.R. 5740, the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act. This bipartisan legislation, introduced by my friend and fellow Arizonan, Representative HARRY MITCHELL, modernizes the "GI Bill" and provides expanded educational benefits for our veterans.

Let there be no doubt about our iron-clad resolve to support our troops. As a nation, we are acutely aware of the extraordinary sacrifices they are making. I have seen it first-

hand in Baghdad and Bagram. We have a solemn responsibility to our service members, and one way to fulfill that responsibility is to help them prepare for life after they leave the military.

The first GI Bill was enacted more than 60 years ago for World War II veterans. It paid for the full cost of attending a public college, including tuition, fees, book purchases, and a monthly living stipend.

For example, in 1974, retired Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Bob Gent from Sierra Vista, Arizona, used his GI Bill benefits to obtain his B.A. from Arizona State University in math and computer science as well as a second degree 30 years later in astrophysics from the University of Texas.

Like Bob, over 7.8 million Americans who served our Nation have received a college education thanks to GI Bill. Unfortunately, the current Montgomery GI Bill does not fulfill the original GI Bill's promise—it does not adequately cover the cost of attending a four-year state college or university.

In 2003, Former Marine Corps Sergeant Tommy Mendoza from Sierra Vista served as an Infantry Mortarman in support of Army Special Operation Forces in Afghanistan. When he re-entered civilian life, Tommy had a difficult time finding a competitive job. He exhausted all of his GI Bill payments on a community college education.

The only option he has left is the Veterans Administration's Vocational Education and Rehabilitation Program. The current GI Bill fails to provide him adequate benefits to attain his college education.

Modernizing the GI Bill is an investment in our future. According to the Congressional Joint Economic Committee, for every \$1 the government invests in our veterans' education, approximately \$7 is generated in economic growth. GI Bill benefits also play an important role in military recruitment.

The Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act also creates a new program in which the government matches, dollar for dollar, any additional scholarships awarded to veterans from institutions within tuition costs above the maximum amount allowed by this legislation. In addition, veterans would have up to 15 years after leaving active duty, compared to ten years under the Montgomery GI Bill, to use their educational assistance benefits.

By voting to pass this legislation, we are demonstrating our deep, unwavering commitment to the brave men and women who fight to preserve our freedom.

STATEMENT FROM WESLEY E. DAVEY, MASTER SERGEANT IN THE ARMY RETIRED RESERVES

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 16, 2008

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, while I was back in the Fourth Congressional District of Minnesota, I met with Wes Davey, a constituent and master sergeant in the Army Retired Reserves. He fought in Operation Iraqi Freedom and is concerned about the funding of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. As Congress begins to debate providing supplemental appropriations for

these wars, I would like to enter Wes's thoughtful words into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

ST. PAUL, MN,
May 2, 2008.

Hon. BETTY MCCOLLUM,
*Western Avenue North,
St. Paul, MN.*

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE MCCOLLUM: The President has requested additional funding to continue the war in Iraq. Before the members of Congress approve this budget, they should consider doing three things.

First, increase taxes in order to at least partially pay for the current and future war funding requests. If these wars are in our national interest as President Bush and others have often told us, we should be willing to pay for them; if these wars are not in our national interest, we should get out of both countries.

It is wrong for our generation to pass off the entire Iraq and Afghanistan war debt to the future generations of taxpayers, and it is also wrong for President Bush and Congress to abrogate their fiscal responsibilities and expect future presidents and future members of Congress to sort out the funding mess from these wars.

Second, the United States Treasury should sell war bonds (as we did during WW2) to finance the portion of the war costs not funded by increased taxes. We need to stop borrowing money from foreign countries to finance our wars. Countries such as Saudi Arabia and China are not loaning us money because they have America's best interest at heart, and their economic influence in our country is already too great.

Third, Congress should set up a government internet website which explains in detail to the American public how the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have been and will be financed. More specifically, where the money has come from, be it China, Saudi Arabia, or other countries, how much each foreign country has loaned us, at what interest rates, and exactly when and how those loans will be repaid.

Thus far in these wars, President Bush has done his very best to place an opaque window between war funding and the American public, which goes against the belief by the founders of our country that good government should transact its business in the open.

Sincerely,

WESLEY E. DAVEY.

FORECLOSURE PREVENTION ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2008

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of the American Housing Rescue and Foreclosure Prevention Act, and I thank Chairman FRANK and Chairwoman WATERS for bringing this important legislation to the House floor.

Madam Speaker, we are all painfully aware of the fact that communities across the Nation are being devastated by the current housing crisis. The reforms in this legislation will help many homeowners stay in their homes and prevent a similar situation from happening again.

The problems caused by subprime and adjustable-rate mortgages are particularly acute

in California, which has the second highest foreclosure rate in the Nation. One in every 78 families is now facing foreclosure in my State. This legislation makes many important reforms to address the current crisis, and I would like to highlight two provisions which I believe are particularly critical for Californians.

First, the measure will expand the FHA program so that homeowners at risk of facing foreclosure can refinance into viable mortgages that are government-backed. Many of my constituents are facing ballooning payments on their mortgages which now far exceed the actual value of their homes. This measure will give them the opportunity to get their finances back on track and keep their homes.

Second, and perhaps most helpful to addressing the crisis in my home State, the legislation makes permanent the FHA loan limit and GSE conforming loan limits temporarily increased by the Economic Stimulus Act. The previous GSE conforming loan limit of \$417,000 and the FHA-insurable loan limit of \$362,000 simply were not high enough to be effective for high cost regions such as California, where the average cost of a home greatly exceeds the national average.

GSE and FHA backing of mortgages are key to ensuring access to affordable mortgages for many home buyers and homeowners. Permanently increasing loan limits is perhaps the single most important thing we can do to ensure that Californians can benefit from congressional efforts to address the mortgage crisis and have access to affordable, fixed-rate mortgages.

I urge my colleagues to do the right thing and vote in support of this legislation so that we can help our neighbors keep their homes and begin to revitalize our communities.

A TRIBUTE TO DR. ALFREDO QUIÑONES-HINOJOSA

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 16, 2008

Ms. ESHOO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and accomplishments of an extraordinary neurosurgeon, professor, mentor and hope-giver, Dr. Alfredo Quiñones-Hinojosa.

The New York Times, May 13, 2008, carried a story which described Dr. Alfredo Quiñones-Hinojosa's incredible journey from Mexicali, Mexico, to the world-renowned halls of the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. His story is the story of America and what immigrants in every chapter of our history contribute to our Nation.

Below is the full text of the article:

A CONVERSATION WITH ALFREDO QUIÑONES-HINOJOSA: A SURGEON'S PATH FROM MIGRANT FIELDS TO OPERATING ROOM

(By Claudia Dreifus)

At the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, Alfredo Quiñones-Hinojosa has four positions. He is a neurosurgeon who teaches oncology and neurosurgery, directs a neurosurgery clinic and heads a laboratory studying brain tumors. He also performs nearly 250 brain operations a year. Twenty years ago, Dr. Quiñones-Hinojosa, now 40, was an illegal immigrant working in the vegetable fields of the Central Valley in California. He became a citizen in 1997 while at Harvard.

Q. Where did you grow up?

A. Mexicali. My father had a small gas station. The family's stability vanished when there was a devaluation of the Mexican peso in the 1980s. My father lost the gas station, and we had no money for food. For a while, I sold hot dogs on the corner to help. As the economic crisis deepened, there seemed no possibility for any future in Mexico. I had big dreams and I wanted more education. So in 1987, when I was 19, I went up to the border between Mexicali and the United States and hopped the fence.

Some years later, I was sitting at a lunch table with colleagues at Harvard Medical School. Someone asked how I'd come to Harvard. "I hopped the fence," I said. Everyone laughed. They thought I was joking.

Q. After you crossed the border, what kind of work did you find?

A. I was a farm laborer in the San Joaquin Valley, seven days a week, sunup to sundown. I lived in this little trailer I paid \$300 a month for. It didn't take long to see that farm work was a dead end.

After a year of it, I moved to Stockton, where I found a job loading sulfur and fish lard onto railroad freight cars. My eyes burned from the sulfur, and my clothes smelled from fish lard, but it paid me enough so that I was able to go to night classes at San Joaquin Delta Community College. There, I met this wonderful human being, Norm Nichols, the speech and debate coach. He took me into his family and mentored me. Norm helped me apply for and get accepted to the University of California, Berkeley.

Once at Berkeley, I took a lot of math and science classes to up my G.P.A. Science and math are their own language. You didn't need to write in perfect English to do well in them. I pulled straight A's in science. In my senior year, someone told me to go see this guy, Hugo Mora, who helped Hispanics with science talent. I brought him my transcript and he said: "Wow! With grades like these, you should be at Harvard Medical School." That's how I got to Harvard. All along, I had much luck with mentors.

Q. Did you find Harvard tough?

A. Not really. Compared to working in the fields, it was easy. The question was what kind of doctor should I become? For a while, I thought I'd be a pediatric oncologist, because I wanted to help children. But then I thought, I'm good with my hands. Maybe I should do surgery.

One day, I was waltzing through Brigham and Women's Hospital and I saw Dr. Peter Black, the chairman of neurosurgery. I introduced myself, and he invited me that day to come to watch him do an operation. As it happened, he was doing an "awake" surgery, where the patient's brain is exposed and the patient is awake so that the surgeon can ask questions. As I watched that, I fell in love with brain surgery.

Q. What about it spoke to you?

A. Imagine, the most beautiful organ of our body, the one that we know least about, the one that makes us who we are, and it was in Dr. Black's hand. It was in front of me. It was pulsating! I realized I could work with my hands and touch this incredible organ, which is what I do now. I cannot conceive of a much more intimate relationship than that. A patient grants you the gift of trusting you with their lives, and there is no room for mistakes.

Dr. Peter Black, he was a very humble person. And he took me under his wing. So here again, I was very fortunate with mentorship. Q. I'm told that you do something that not all surgeons do: you spend a lot of time with patients before an operation. Why?

A. I meet them several times, and their families. They don't know if they are going

to wake up after the operation. Not all the time am I successful. I do about 230 to 240 brain tumor operations a year. The majority make it. Some have complications. And some—2 to 3 percent—it takes a while for the patients to wake up. I need to meet everyone so that they know the risks. But getting to know these patients, it's the most painful part.

I was at a funeral yesterday. This was a 21-year-old man with a young wife, pregnant. Three surgeries, and the tumor kept growing and growing. And he told me, "There's no possible way I'll give up." He fought so hard. He trusted me with his life. Not once, several times. I owed him my presence.

Q. How do you handle such losses?

A. One of the ways I work it out is through research, the laboratory. I'm trying to learn about the causes of these recurring tumors. The patients, they can donate tissue, which we will examine.

My hypothesis is—and there are quite a few scientists who believe this—there are within these brain tumors a small subset of cells that can keep growing, even when you think you've taken them all out. We call them brain stem cells. They can keep making themselves, and they can make "daughter cells" that can become anything else in the brain. They have the ability to go to sleep for a little bit and then wake up and do it again. So we're trying to identify this small subset of cells we may be leaving behind when we make these beautiful surgeries.

Q. Have you actually found them?

A. Yes, but only in the laboratory. When we've found them, they may be a product of the experimental conditions of the laboratory. We haven't found them yet in live patients. The next challenge is to see if they truly exist in the human brain while the patient is alive.

Q. When you hear anti-immigrant expressions on talk radio and cable television, how do you feel?

A. It bothers me. Because I know what it was that drove me to jump the fence. It was poverty and frustration with a system that would have never allowed me to be who I am today.

As long as there is poverty in the rest of the world and we export our culture through movies and television, people who are hungry are going to come here. There's no way to stop it.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2419, FOOD, CONSERVATION, AND ENERGY ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Conference Report on the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, and I would like to commend my colleague from Minnesota, Chairman PETERSON, for his tireless efforts. He is a champion for rural American and his leadership was essential for the success of this legislation.

The conference report—while not perfect—is a step in the right direction. This farm bill makes unprecedented investments in nutrition and conservation programs while also helping to address our Nation's energy crisis. In addition, this farm bill begins to scale back the commodity program by reducing spending on farmers who do not need the help.

Three of every four dollars from this farm bill go towards nutrition programs, which could not come at a better time for American families. Even without the spike in food prices, millions of Americans are unable to afford a sufficient and healthy diet. Unfortunately, community food banks and our current nutrition programs have not been able to meet the growing burden from rising food costs. That is why this farm bill provides \$50 million immediately to address the shortfalls that food banks and food shelves are facing right now. It also increases funding for nutrition programs by more than \$10 billion. For the first time in 30 years individual benefits will be increased, and for the first time ever we will take the important step of indexing benefits to the cost of living. It is unacceptable that in the richest Nation in the world, so many go hungry—especially children. This legislation is a necessary step towards an America free from hunger.

The farm bill also increases our commitment to international nutrition programs in response to growing humanitarian crises. As global food prices continue to rise, the aid that the U.S. provides to the developing world becomes more critical than ever. I am proud that this farm bill does include an increase in mandatory funding for the McGovern-Dole Food for Education and Child Nutrition program, but unfortunately it provides much less—nearly \$800 million less—than the House included in our version. There is a nationwide consensus that we need to do more to help feed hungry children around the world, and I will continue working to increase funding for the McGovern-Dole program.

Investing in conservation and domestic energy programs will benefit Minnesota and the entire country. With almost 8 billion in new conservation dollars, this conference report represents a shift towards sustainability in U.S. farm policy. These funds will be used to extend and expand a variety of programs that incentivize and provide technical assistance for farming practices that improve the quality of soil, water, and air on working lands. This legislation also represents a real commitment

to dealing with the energy crisis. With record oil prices and new information about corn-based ethanol, it is crucial that we invest in viable fuels for the future. That is why this farm bill provides a billion dollars for R&D of advanced biofuels and shifts incentives from corn-based ethanol to biofuels from feedstocks such as switchgrass and woodchips.

The Food, Conservation and Energy Act modernizes and makes much needed reforms to the commodity payment system; by closing loopholes, eliminating payments to wealthy farmers, and capping direct payments, this bill cuts \$60 billion from the commodity programs. At the same time, this farm bill strengthens the safety net for farmers that protects them against price drops, droughts, floods and other disasters.

This farm bill is a bipartisan compromise that addresses our urgent needs and invests in our future. I urge my colleagues in joining me in supporting the conference report.

IN RECOGNITION OF TREADWAY
CREEK TRAIL IN OHIO

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 16, 2008

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the dedication of the Treadway Creek Trail in Ohio's 10th Congressional District.

On Friday, May 16, 2008, I will join with Ohio Governor Ted Strickland, Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson, Ohio Senator Shirley Smith, and Ward 15 Councilman Brian Cummins for the grand opening of this important natural and historic link along Ohio's Towpath Trail which will connect Cleveland with Akron, Canton, New Philadelphia, and all points between. Other partners in this project include the Old Brooklyn Development Corporation, the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing

Authority, the State of Ohio Clean Ohio Funds, Natural Resources Assistance Council of Cuyahoga County, the Ohio Canal Corridor, and the Ohio & Erie Canalway Association. Treadway Creek is a natural tributary to the Cuyahoga River in Cleveland's Old Brooklyn neighborhood. With the opening of the Treadway Creek Trail, the people of Old Brooklyn and other neighborhoods nearby will have an important natural resource to enjoy and will ultimately have pedestrian and bicycle access to the Cuyahoga River and the Towpath Trail.

The Treadway Creek Trail restores and preserves for future generations 21 acres of natural open space in an urban section of the 10th District. This includes a prime riparian corridor and wooded ravine, acquired through donations and conservation easements. Restoration elements include erosion and water quality improvements, invasive species removal, and plantings of native grasses and woodland wildflowers. The Treadway Trail provides public access to the ravine and connects the developing Towpath Trail at lower Harvard Avenue by incorporating retaining walls planted with native species, interpretive and directional signage, scenic overlook areas, custom benches, and handcrafted timber railings. The Towpath Trail, which links our state's history, culture, nature, and geography along 110 miles between New Philadelphia and Cleveland, will ultimately connect Akron and Canton with Lake Erie at Whiskey Island. With our continued stewardship of Treadway Creek, Old Brooklyn and the Treadway Creek Trail will be an important linkage in this web of urban, suburban, and rural trails which connect the people of Northeast Ohio with their history, culture and natural resources.

Madam Speaker, please join me in recognizing the beauty of Treadway Creek and the will of the people of Northeastern Ohio to protect this important piece of nature for the people's continued enjoyment.